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Islamic Terror and the West: A Question of Priorities

Dr. Stephen C. Pelletiere

ISLAMIC TERROR AND THE WEST:

A QUESTION OF PRIORITIES

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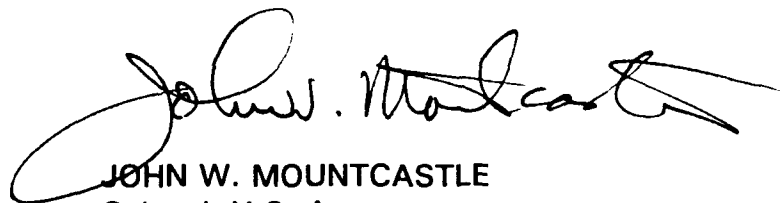
FOREWORD

The President of Egypt and Prime Minister of Israel have urged President Clinton to join with them in a "war on Islamic terror." Both men insist that Iran is fomenting a plot against the West; and that the World Trade Center bombing is an example of terrorist activities that are part of this plot. This study examines these claims and argues that they are not credible, that all of the evidence they cite is circumstantial, and that much of it is contradictory. The author concludes that the conspiracy President Mubarak and Prime Minister Rabin are warning of does not exist.

Dr. Pelletiere speculates on what is in the minds of the two leaders and why they have raised the issue of Islamic terrorism. He suggests that both are confronting dangerous security situations at home, which they are having difficulty coping with. They hope to enlist the aid of the United States to maintain themselves in power.

The author suggests that this call to mount a war on so-called Islamic terrorism is potentially damaging to U.S. security in the Middle East. Specifically, it could complicate the ability of the American military to guard vital U.S. interests in this part of the world.

The Strategic Studies Institute is pleased to publish this report as a contribution to the debate on U.S. policy in this important region.



JOHN W. MOUNTCASTLE
Colonel, U.S. Army
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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR

DR. STEPHEN C. PELLETIERE is a Research Professor of National Security Affairs at the Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College. He received his Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of California, Berkeley, in 1978. He is the author of the books, *The Kurds: An Unstable Element in the Persian Gulf*, and the recently published *Chaos in a Vacuum: The Iran-Iraq War*. Additionally, he is author of the Strategic Studies Institute reports, *The Kurds and Their Agas: An Assessment of the Situation in Northern Iraq*; *Mass Action and Islamic Fundamentalism: The Revolt of the Brooms*, and *Oil and the New World System: CENTCOM Rethinks Its Mission*; and coauthor of *Iraqi Power and U.S. Security in the Middle East* and *Lessons Learned: The Iran-Iraq War*.

ISLAMIC TERROR AND THE WEST: A QUESTION OF PRIORITIES

Introduction.

When Israel's Prime Minister Rabin visited the United States in March he warned President Clinton about the growing danger from Islamic terror.¹ He claimed that Iran was fomenting a major plot which targeted America's allies in the region. With the bombing of the World Trade Center in New York, the dimensions of the plot appeared to broaden—it seemed to be that the United States was now exposed to terrorist attacks. Rabin pledged to assist Washington in fighting the Iranian-inspired threat, and he appealed to President Clinton to commit funds to financing the effort.

When shortly afterward Egypt's President Mubarak made his official visit to the White House, he echoed the same theme.² Both Rabin and Mubarak spoke in the context of numerous stories in the media about Islamic extremism, which allegedly was sweeping the Middle East, threatening regimes in several countries.³ The appeals to Clinton by Mubarak and Rabin gained weight because of the articles and TV specials. Indeed, the Egyptian leader and his Israeli counterpart drew heavily on evidence provided by the media to make their case.

This study looks at Islamic terror issue, and concludes that basically it comprises three elements. The first involves Egypt, where an undefined network of terrorist groups is perpetrating acts of anti-government violence, which Mubarak appears helpless to suppress. The second focuses on Israel, and there another Muslim extremist organization has triggered a bloody upheaval among the Palestinian community. The Israelis maintain that this is a calculated campaign,

engineered by Iran, to scuttle the Arab-Israeli peace talks.⁴ And finally there is the World Trade Center bombing. This, effectively, is the centerpiece of the whole Islamic plot theory. Mubarak and Rabin have cited it as proof that a war on Islamic terror is desperately needed, if the West is to contain a mounting threat to world stability.

The History of the Plot.

The belief that Iran was instigating a transnational conspiracy surfaced in 1990, when a group called the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) appeared on the point of legally taking over the government in Algeria. The country's secular rulers had allowed the Front to compete in local elections, not thinking it would succeed. Succeed it did, and seemed certain to capture national power in scheduled elections for the parliament.

The secular rule in Algeria was notoriously corrupt, but the FIS was not seen as a welcome alternative—at least not by Algeria's middle class.⁵ The FIS was intolerant and would almost certainly restrict democracy as it Islamicized the system.

The Islamic takeover never materialized because the ruling party, the Front de la Liberation Nationale (FLN), cancelled the elections. After this the FLN cracked down on the FIS, and, when the FIS fought back, large scale roundups of FIS supporters were instituted, which put many in jail.⁶

This dramatic series of events caught the attention of the western media, which publicized the charge of the FLN leaders that the FIS was subsidized by Iran.⁷ Articles appeared claiming that Tehran once more was attempting to export its revolution. Cited as possible fundamentalist targets were Egypt, Tunisia and

Jordan. However, once the immediate threat from the FIS subsided, the furor over Islamic extremism abated, and for awhile stories on the fundamentalists disappeared.

The Situation in Egypt.

Focus on Islamic extremism returned in 1992 as the government of President Mubarak entered into a series of confrontations with elements that he labelled religious extremist. There was a spate of what appeared to be terrorist acts, in which foreign tourists visiting the antiquities were set upon, and in some instances badly beaten.

Mubarak followed the lead of the FLN by claiming the attacks were Iranian-inspired.⁸ They were meant, he said, to embarrass his government and to deny Egypt desperately needed tourist revenue.

Mubarak claimed that his security forces had uncovered an underground terrorist network, the *jama'a al Islamiyya* (the organization of Islam); the *jama'a*, he said, was controlled by Tehran. Three years ago, while conducting research in Egypt, the author enquired about the *jama'a*.⁹ What he learned then has convinced him that Mubarak's claims should not be accepted.¹⁰

There is no doubt that in Egypt numerous small religious groups exist and that some perpetrate violence against the government. However, to say that these groups collectively constitute an entity, or that they are actively cooperating with each other is not warranted on the basis of the evidence we have.

Indeed, many of the groups Mubarak has cited as belonging to the *jama'a* appear to have died long ago. Having been penetrated by the police, they disbanded. Others were never meant to survive. Called into life to perform a

specific action (as, for example, the assassination of Sadat) they disbanded once that was done.¹¹ The bottom line is that no one can state with any definiteness that the *jama'a* is a real organization.

It is particularly difficult to accept Mubarak's claims when one knows something of the *jama'a*'s past history. In 1990 those Egyptians willing to believe it existed, also felt it could not be more than a minor offshoot of the larger and infinitely more influential Muslim Brotherhood.¹² They felt that the *jama'a* comprised all the little groups that the Brotherhood used for violent acts it sponsored, but with which it did not wish to be associated.

However, after Saddam Husayn invaded Kuwait, the Brotherhood took a stand with the Saudis, on the side of the coalition. At that point it became respectable, in much the same way as did Syria when it also took a pro-Saudi/coalition stand.¹³ Mubarak toned down his attacks against it. Instead, it was the *jama'a* he warned against; it was the head of all the opposition forces in Egypt.

This is really too neat. Significant terrorist organizations do not come into being overnight. Mubarak must tell us how the *jama'a* moved from relative obscurity to occupy such a commanding presence in this short space of time.

Mubarak could satisfy skeptics, if he were to offer concrete evidence of an Iranian tie. However, he has not done this, and without it the whole plot theory is unconvincing. Egyptians are notoriously arrogant when it comes to politics, and hence it is hard to see why they would take direction from outsiders, particularly Iranians.¹⁴ As an Egyptian told the author in 1990, Egyptians don't **import** political movements, they **export** them.

In the end, one is left with the religious connection. The western media makes much of the fact that religious figures are active in all these anti-government attacks. This, however, is not at all extraordinary.

Under Islam, church and state are not separated. As a consequence, religious leaders regularly castigate governments they consider unfit to rule.¹⁵ Recently a number of *imams* have taken such anti-regime positions.¹⁶ In some places (and Egypt and Algeria are outstanding examples of this) their fulminations have attracted large audiences and provoked subsequent acts of violence. But to say that this agitation is conspiratorial does not seem justified on the basis of the evidence that exists.

The Situation in Israel.

While these events were unfolding in Egypt, violence perpetrated by Muslims cropped up in Israel. There, the Israeli government had been battling the so-called *intifadah* ("uprising"). This was an internal revolt, and in that respect it differed markedly from the activity of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). The PLO has led the fight against Israel since 1968, but it has never been able to establish bases inside the occupied territories, largely because of the tight security Israel maintained.

However, in 1988 a group called Hamas appeared, and it did successfully organize in the Gaza Strip. Hamas succeeded where the PLO had failed because Israel supported it.¹⁷ Hamas, a religious organization, opposed the secularly-oriented PLO. The Israelis reasoned that, if Hamas was allowed to operate it might win converts from the PLO. At the very least, warfare between the two groups would weaken the overall Palestinian movement.

For a time, this appeared to be a shrewd assessment. However, Hamas soon began receiving funds from wealthy Saudis, and with this money was able to expand operations.¹⁸ Hamas angered the Israelis by targeting Arab collaborators. Without informants, Israel's hold over the territories was considerably weakened.

In December last year, Hamas perpetrated a particularly heinous act—it kidnapped one of Israel's special border policeman, and subsequently executed him.¹⁹ The fact that Hamas could do this was shocking. It showed the degree to which Israel's grip on the territories had slipped—no informant came forward to tip the Israelis to the hideout of the Hamas organization.

Israeli public opinion turned against Rabin, and he, in response, took drastic action. He rounded up 415 individuals, whom he claimed were Hamas members, and deported them. Rabin's action touched off massive demonstrations on the West bank and Gaza Strip, and the Palestinian delegation to the peace talks refused to attend the scheduled session. Rabin maintained that this was part of Hamas' design to wreck the peace talks. And like Mubarak he, too, claimed that this was an action orchestrated by Tehran.²⁰

Just as Mubarak's interpretation of events was suspect, so is Rabin's. The Prime Minister claimed that Hamas had kidnapped the Israeli policeman specifically to wreck the peace talks. It is also possible, however, that Hamas was retaliating for actions that the security forces had taken against it. Just prior to the outbreak of the demonstrations, Hamas and the Israelis were locked in a fierce struggle—for several months the two sides had been stalking each other. First the Israelis would assassinate a Hamas operative, then Hamas would retaliate in kind.²¹

Also arguing against the theory that Hamas directed the riots is the nature of those disturbances. They were non-sectarian—both Christian and Muslim Palestinians took part.²² Further, the course of the riots was directed by adolescent youth. They were the real spark plugs, the ones who kept the riots going. And, finally, if the aim of Hamas was to scuttle the peace talks, it did not work. They went forward because the PLO was able to see to it that they did.

One could argue that the riots were spontaneous—once Rabin deported the 415, virtually nothing could prevent them from occurring. The Palestinians fear deportation before practically all else. It renders them stateless, for many a fate worse than death. If Rabin wanted to keep the peace talks on track, he should have eschewed the deportations.

Once again, as in the case of Egypt, no concrete evidence exists that Hamas and Iran are tied. Indeed, since we know that Hamas is financed by the Saudis, it is virtually certain the connection is not there. The Saudis and Iranians are bitter rivals. If Hamas took money, or orders from Tehran, Riyadh would cut off its support.²³

The World Trade Center Bombing.

Up until this point, actions by the religious extremists involved attacks on Middle Eastern governments. There was no hint the militants were contemplating targeting the West. With the bombing of the World Trade Center this perception changed.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation arrested several Arabs residing in the United States in connection with the bombing. The media subsequently reported

that all worshiped at a mosque in Jersey City led by a blind shaykh who had fled Egypt after being implicated in the assassination of former President Sadat.²⁴

The media said the shaykh had ties to the *jama'a*, and thus the inference was that the accused were members.²⁵ This, they denied.

As other details of the bombing came out, the affair became more and more curious. If what the government was claiming was true, the accused were certainly not professional terrorists; indeed, they were the rankest amateurs. Their behavior was bizarre.²⁶ Moreover, they did not appear to have any political affiliation, and—as the federal authorities stated—no link between them and any foreign power could be established.²⁷

In the author's view, none of the Middle Eastern countries associated with terrorism would want to see the World Trade Center bombed, at least not now. Iran has been trying to promote a loan from the IMF to bail itself out of a deteriorating economic situation. To that end it has sought to appear respectable. Similarly, Saddam Husayn has been on his best behavior, trying to get the economic sanctions against Iraq lifted. Syria is rehabilitated, after taking part in DESERT STORM. There is no other likely candidate. Some have suggested Sudan, but Khartoum is deperately poor and does not have the resources for this.

More than anything, the timing of the bombing contributed to promoting the Islamic plot theory. It occurred between the time Rabin left Washington, after talking to President Clinton, and when Mubarak arrived. Both leaders seized on it as proof that Islamic terrorism was a great danger, and also that it was not limited to the Middle East. It could hit at targets in the United States.

If the latter claim were true, it might be reason to cooperate with Rabin and Mubarak in their "terror war." However, it is hard to accept the plot theory, when so many details are contradictory, and when the essential element—Iranian involvement—has not been proven.

If Iran, or some other foreign power, is not stirring up conditions in the Middle East, then just what is going on? That is what we propose to look at now. We will examine the situations in Egypt and Israel, to see if there is not some other explanation for all this.

Mubarak's Dilemma.

Egypt's President Mubarak presides over a country that is an economic disaster. With over 70 million people—the overwhelming majority of whom are farmers—and with a limited supply of arable land, Egypt has barely been making ends meet for decades.

Until recently Mubarak could make do on the basis of remittances from overseas. Egyptians are willing workers and will travel the globe in search of jobs. They send money home—quite a bit of it—which fuels the local economy. But then abruptly the bottom dropped out of the overseas job market.²⁸

This left Mubarak dependent on loans, mainly from the World Bank. Fortunately for him, the Bank was disposed to help out. However, the Bank does not lend money unconditionally. It wants Egypt to open its economy. To that end, the Bank required that reforms be undertaken. It asked that Mubarak sell off enterprises in Egypt's public sector.²⁹ This, the Bank feels, will create a class of Egyptian entrepreneurs who can move the country towards capitalism.

In the eyes of Egypt's poor, however, this entrepreneurial class is an abomination. It flaunts its wealth; it spends lavishly on consumer goods which the average Egyptian cannot hope to possess; it behaves in ways that pious Muslims deplore.

To be sure, impoverishment has been a condition of life in Egypt long before Mubarak. However, in previous times—and particularly this was the case under Nasser—the contrast between haves and have-nots was much less stark. People who had money hid it away, fearing the socialist government would sequester it. Once Mubarak—and this was also true of his predecessor, Sadat—began promoting consumerism, previously repressed class antagonism exploded.

Today, corruption in Egypt rivals that of any other country, and this has increased the despair of the poor Egyptians who perceive a gap widening between themselves and the elite.³⁰ In reaction, many of the poor have embraced traditional Islam, which teaches that the lifestyle of the West is wicked; it is not worth having; it must be shunned. For those in despair, a message like this is comforting—that which they cannot have, they should not have because it's sinful.

If the fundamentalists left matters so, and simply rejected the West's lifestyle, Mubarak would probably have no problems. Their rejection would constitute a form of "quietism," turning the mass of Egyptians into passivists. But the religion of the fundamentalists is not quietistic; it is militant. So not surprisingly the fundamentalists have lashed out against Mubarak, and, in their sermons, individual *imams* have castigated the President—as they did his predecessor Sadat—for introducing this "filth" into Egypt.³¹ Mubarak fought back

by arresting some of the more outspoken *imams*, and this produced a certain tension in Egypt, which erupted last December after the devastating earthquake.

The Situation Polarizes.

Mubarak's government was derelict in getting aid to the quake victims. Whole communities rioted and Mubarak saw in this the elements of a plot. He claimed that outside agitators—from Iran—had stirred the communities to revolt.³²

Mubarak ordered his police to cordon off one of the poorest districts of Cairo and make a sweep through it looking for "terrorists."³³ The raid ended with some 400 persons being arrested, who were among the district's more pious residents.

After the raid, riots broke out all over Egypt and several foreign tourists were killed, a particularly ironic development. Mubarak originally had embraced the West to get aid for his strapped economy. The loans he received opened cleavages in Egypt's traditional society. This brought a crackdown by the police, which in turn brought an escalation of violence **against tourists**. Tourism is Egypt's only other significant source of revenue after Bank loans. Hence, the weakening of the tourist industry has pushed Mubarak further toward the West.

Mubarak Chooses Sides.

In January, Mubarak ordered his police to invade a mosque in southern Egypt, a stronghold of extremism, he charged.³⁴ Twenty-one worshipers were killed by the police gunfire. Mubarak portrayed this as a necessary action, given the threat to which Egypt is exposed. Indeed, in an interview in *The Washington Post*, Mubarak appeared to be exploiting the incident to gain sympathy from the West. He said, ". . .terrorism is a plague spreading all over the world and it calls for international cooperation to resist this unhealthy phenomenon."³⁵

It appears Mubarak aims to enhance his financial backing from the United States, and is doing so by laying down a challenge to the fundamentalists. Mubarak said, "If they continue to attack tourists, I shall be **very** strict with them." This is the same sort of tough line that Sadat took just before he was assassinated, and so it is surprising to see Mubarak pursuing it also. For the United States, which has invested heavily in Egypt, this is a disturbing turn of events.³⁷

The Case of Israel.

The case of Israel is more simple. Israelis do not want a million and a half Palestinians living among them. Powerful figures within the government would like to expel them to make way for Russian Jews who can be brought to Israel as settlers.³⁸

Indeed, the author believes the recent expulsion was only the first round of deportations. If the Israelis can defy the United Nations successfully over this, they will step up the expulsions until they have forced out the entire Palestinian community.³⁹ The Palestinians see that this—or something like it, is in the works, and thus feel themselves backed to the wall. Having nowhere to go, they fight to maintain their precarious existence, with stones and burning tires, and more recently with guns.

It is important to be aware, however, of who is pitted against whom in this struggle—it is the local community (both in Egypt and in Israel) against the police. It is not, as Mubarak and Rabin would have us believe, international forces stirring up deluded elements of their respective populations.⁴⁰ Community-police fights like this go on all the time; indeed, they are a feature of urban life generally. In the

ghettoes of the United States, urban gangs will frequently feud with police, who are seen to be exploiting the community.

The governments of Rabin and Mubarak are inept, in the sense that neither is able to correct the ills that beset their societies.⁴¹ Neither leader has the statesmanship to impose a solution to the escalating unrest. (At the same time, it is also true that neither has the support of important elements for a statesmenlike solution. In Egypt, the new elite who support Mubarak's move to the West applaud his harsh methods of control.⁴² In Israel, vigilante settler groups have formed to assist the police in terrorizing the Palestinians.⁴³)

Both Rabin and Mubarak are appealing to the United States to join them in a war on terror. They are claiming that the United States needs them to defend its interests—not only in the Middle East, but in the United States as well.⁴⁴ The Egyptians and Israelis will provide us with the expertise and on-the-spot resources to attack the terrorists, we will provide primarily the financial means.

U.S. policymakers may decide to go along with this antiterrorism war. In one respect it would be tempting to do. The United States cannot tolerate the overthrow of Mubarak and Rabin. As difficult as these regimes are, they are better than the alternative—if that is some form of fundamentalism which certainly would be against U.S. interests.⁴⁵

At the same time, however, we should not delude ourselves. If we decide to agree to the "terror war," we will not be the principal beneficiaries. It will not be a case of the Israelis and Egyptians doing us a favor; it will be the other way around. Washington will have to prop up two governments under assault. Essentially, this would be the deal.

If this were all that were involved, it might not be a problem of national concern. Unfortunately, however, much more is at stake. Our whole Middle East policy is on the line, as it were, and we will look at this aspect of the problem now.

U.S. Policy in the Middle East.

America is being exhorted by Mubarak and Rabin to view the problem of Middle East unrest as terrorist-connected. Both rulers have singled out Iran, and to a lesser degree the Sudan, as perpetrating a conspiracy against the West.

The two leaders have told American audiences that terrorism—formerly a Middle East problem—has invaded the United States with the World Trade Center bombing. They want President Clinton to launch a war on Islamic terror, which, according to Rabin and Mubarak, should not entail a great deal of sacrifice, since the groups are known and rough handling will wipe them out.

However, if the author of this study is correct, then what Rabin and Mubarak are promising is unrealizable. The author believes that organizations like Hamas and the *jama'a* (presuming it does in fact exist) are not the causes of Middle East violence; they are rather pathological symptoms of societies in trouble.

The fact is that elements of the population in Egypt and Israel see themselves as threatened and are fighting back. The more violence that is applied against them the more the disruptions will spread. Caught in the middle of this will be U.S. personnel—military and civilian—posted to the area.

If the United States follows the urging of Mubarak and Rabin, it will mean involving ourselves in a bitter inter-communal war in the manner of the French in Algeria, a situation that Washington should certainly try to avoid.

Furthermore the Mubarak-Rabin "terror war" is dangerous from another angle—it will confuse our current Middle East policy. We have a policy now that is workable—namely to focus our resources on guarding the Gulf, the region from which we are increasingly deriving our energy supplies. For the military to perform its mission, it must maintain a forward presence, and work closely with the Gulf monarchs, as in DESERT STORM.

If we join the "terror war," we will, in effect, be creating a whole new policy, in addition to the one we already have. Inevitably the two will conflict. One group with which we almost certainly will have trouble is the Gulf monarchs, who mistrust the Egyptians and hate and fear the Israelis.⁴⁶

Reassuring the Monarchs.

After DESERT STORM, for the first time since the end of World War II, the United States obtained a military presence in the Gulf. It did so by gaining the trust of the Gulf monarchs, and impressing on them that we are their last line of defense. Subsequently, we worked out a number of bilateral security arrangements which will enable us to sustain U.S. presence in the area.

To be sure, many in Washington disapproved this course of action, deeming the monarchs unworthy of America's support. However, Gulf oil is vital to America's welfare, and the oil is physically possessed by the monarchs. Those who advocate cutting ties to them must propose an alternate energy policy, one that is practical and can be put into effect. To date, no one has done this.⁴⁷

This author believes we have a great deal going for us in the Gulf right now. More than anything, we have a foundation on which to build. To follow the Mubarak-Rabin initiative would be to regress.

The Surrogate Problem.

Mubarak and Rabin want to function as our surrogates in the Persian Gulf. Mubarak, at least, has already tried to set himself up as such, and was summarily rebuffed by the monarchs. Just after Operation DESERT STORM, he and Syrian ruler Hafez Assad crafted an agreement whereby they would cooperate with the monarchs to defend the area.

After the monarchs had seemingly agreed, nothing happened, and it soon became apparent that as far as the monarchs were concerned the agreement was meaningless. The fact is that they distrust the Egyptians and Syrians, and are unwilling to hand over their security to either, and certainly not to a combination of both.

As for Israel, no Arab state really trusts the Israelis, and were Washington to make Tel Aviv its surrogate in the area, this would alienate the entire region against us.

Thus we have no alternative except to guard our vital resources ourselves. This is CENTCOM's job, and we should be concentrating on facilitating its operations. Linking up with Mubarak and Rabin would complicate the command's mission enormously.

In the end this comes down to the question of priorities—to agree to the "terror war" we must undercut—or at least vitiate—our present policy in the Middle East. Resources the military requires to build a strong presence in the Gulf will be siphoned off to fight suppositious Islamic terrorist groups. It is conceivable, for example, that essential programs like sea and air lift will be sacrificed as Congress prefers to focus on the "terror war."

The irony is that the United States has gone through all this once before. Essentially, the course Mubarak and Rabin are urging us to pursue is the same that we followed with the Shah of Iran. The Egyptians and Israelis, in effect, want to become the policemen of the Persian Gulf, which is the role that the Shah tried to play. That whole experience with the Shah in the 1970s ultimately proved a debacle. Why should we make the same mistake twice?

ENDNOTES

1. See "Israel Seeking to Convince U.S. That West Is Threatened By Iran," *The Washington Post*, March 13, 1993. The article quotes Rabin as saying that "Iran is on a megamaniacal quest to be a Middle East empire, by using all the varieties of fundamentalist Islam to shake Arab regimes." It goes on to say that Rabin sought to impress upon President Clinton that "Iranian-inspired Islamic extremism. . . has become a major threat to the stability of the Middle East and the interests of the West."

2. "Mubarak Cautions Islamic Extremists," *The Washington Post*, March 5, 1993. This interview was given shortly before Mubarak left to meet with Clinton.

3. The media's coverage of the Islamic fundamentalists has passed through two distinct phases. The initial group of stories appeared in 1991 and early 1992. See "U.S. Aide Calls Muslim Militants Big Concern In World," *The New York Times*, January 1, 1992; "Tunisia Faces Renewed Threat From Islamic Fundamentalists," *The Washington Post*, January 11, 1992; Moslem militants polarize Arab World," *The Financial Times*, January 14, 1992; "The Saudis Are Fearful, Too, As Islam's Militant Tide Rises," *The New York Times*, December 31, 1991; "A Fundamentalist Finds a Fulcrum in Sudan," *The New York Times*, January 29, 1992; "Tunis Chief Calls for Arab Repression of Militants," *The New York Times*, January 5, 1992; "Election Jars Algeria's Rulers," *The Washington Post*, December 30, 1991; "Wishful Thinking About Islamic Fundamentalism," *The Washington Post*, January 19, 1992; "Jordan keeps a wary eye on the Islamic Surge in Algeria," *The Financial Times*, January 29, 1992; "Algeria's New Muslims," *The Washington Post*, January 27, 1992. As discussed below in the study, coverage of extremism diminished considerably after curbing the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) movement in Algeria, to reappear at the beginning of this year, just before the appearance of Rabin and Mubarak in Washington. See "Islamic fundamentalists of Iran rushing to fill the void left by the Evil Empire," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, January 5, 1993; "Muslims' Fury Falls on Egypt's Christians," *The New York Times*, March 15, 1993; "The Snake of Terror in Our Garden," *The Wall Street Journal*, March 5, 1993; "Fundamentalism: Last Spasm of the 20th Century," *The New York Times*, April 6, 1993; "Egypt, Algeria Assail Iran for Backing Rebels," *The Washington Post*, April 8, 1993, and "A Terrorist Network in America?" *The New York Times*, April 7, 1993.

4. See "Death threats deal setback to Mideast talks," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, April 19, 1993.

5. See Stephen Pelletiere, *Mass Action and Islamic Fundamentalism: The Revolt of the Brooms*, Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, March 20, 1992.

6. After the cancellation, the government moved against the fundamentalists and this commenced a bloody repression. As might have been

expected, the fundamentalists went underground, and today Algeria is experiencing what amounts to a civil war. See "Toll in Army Barracks Attack Now 19 Dead," Algiers Radio, April 2, 1993, *Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS)*—NES-93-062.

7. In *Mass Action and Islamic Fundamentalism*, I investigate this claim that Iran directs the activities of the FIS.

8. See "President Endorses 'Terrorist' Death Sentences," Cairo, MENA, December 10, 1992, *FBIS*—NES-93-2380.

9. Pelletiere, *Mass Action and Islamic Fundamentalism*.

10. The author talked to both Americans serving in Egypt and Egyptian officials. He encountered a great deal of incredulity about the organization on both sides. To be sure, Mubarak's people supported the President's view that it was real, and posed a danger. But, in those days everyone—Americans and Egyptians alike—believed that the danger was compassable. On the other hand, outside Egypt a number of individuals claimed that the *jama'a* was a quite serious threat. See Barry Rubin, *Islamic Fundamentalism in Egyptian Politics*, New York: St. Martin's, 1990.

11. This certainly was the case with *tikfar wa'l hijrah*, the group that assassinated Sadat.

12. The Muslim Brotherhood is a complex organization and one about which we are not prepared to deal here. However, suffice it to say it is extremely conservative, not to say reactionary, and, consequently, not at all revolutionary. It has firm ties to the Saudi royal family. It mistrusts Mubarak because he is a republican, which essentially is the view of the House of Saud.

13. For a discussion of why the Brotherhood and the Syrians went over to the side of the coalition see *Mass Action and Islamic Fundamentalism*.

14. Egypt is a Sunni country; Iran is Shia. These two sects of Islam have for centuries been antagonistic towards one another. Effectively, therefore, we are being asked to believe that the Egyptians would submit to dictates from a non-semitic, non-Sunni nation. This is asking a lot.

15. Under Islam, Muslim holy men can actually delegitimize a government by declaring it an abomination. This they do by publishing a *fatwah*, religious decree. This enjoins Muslims not to cooperate with the offending ruler.

16. The *imams* that oppose Mubarak in Egypt and the FLN in Algeria tend to be drawn from the so-called informal mosque network, that is religious leaders who are not officials of the respective governments. For more on this see *Mass Action and Islamic Fundamentalism*.

17. See "Is Islam a New Middle East Enemy?" in *Middle East*, a publication of the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program, Vol. III, Number 2.

18. See "Arafat, Assad Meet On Talks," *The Washington Post*, April 20, 1993.

19. See "Israel seeking to convince U.S. That West is Threatened by Iran."

20. See "The Threat To Israel From Hamas," *The Washington Post*, December 21, 1992.

21. The Israelis were using hit squads composed of policeman disguised as Arabs, who circulated the Palestinian areas looking for suspected Hamas operatives. On spying their man, they killed him. See "Israeli Court Blocks Expulsion of Arabs," *The Washington Post*, December 18, 1992.

22. See *Lies of Our Times*, February 1993.

23. The Saudis represent Wahhabism. The Wahhabis are an extremely puritanical sub-set of the Sunni sect. As noted above the Iranians are Shias. To the Wahhabis, the Shias are the worst heretics, and the Wahhabis have a long history of persecuting Shias in Saudi Arabia. During the Iran-Iraq War, Khomeini actually called for the overthrow of the House of Saud and the "cleansing" of the Holy Places.

24. The shaykh is Omar Abdel Rahman. An outspoken opponent of former Egyptian President Sadat, the shaykh was tried in connection with Sadat's slaying. He was acquitted and continued preaching against Sadat's successor, Mubarak. Abruptly, he left Egypt for the United States, where he currently resides in New Jersey. See "Trade Center Probe Is Far From Done," *The Washington Post*, March 7, 1993; "Egyptian Cleric Has Inspired Violence," *The Washington Post*, March 6, 1993, and "Sheikh Emerges to Deny Link to Bombing," *The New York Times*, March 19, 1993.

25. See "Sheikh Emerges to Deny Link to Bombing."

26. The first suspect arrested (the man accused of renting the van used to carry the explosives) allegedly went back three times to the rental agency from which he had rented it to report it stolen. This was after the bombing had occurred. He wanted his deposit back. He also had in his wallet the card of the second man implicated in the plot. Moreover, in applying to rent the van he gave as references individuals subsequently arrested. Several suspects made no attempt to leave the country after the bombing, even though all apparently knew that the FBI had the mosque under surveillance. For the FBI's pre-bombing investigation of the Jersey City mosque see "U.S. Reportedly 'Refused' to Extricate 'Abd-al-Rahman," *Al Ahram* Press Agency, December 9, 1992. It has been suggested that these amateur terrorists constitute an even greater threat to world security than the old professional variety (see "New Kind of Terrorist,

Amateurs and Ad Hoc, Worries Authorities," *The Wall Street Journal*, March 17, 1993). This, however, is very hard to swallow.

27. Adding to the confusion, the shaykh reportedly has links to the CIA. Several stories have appeared purporting to show that he was a recruiter for the Afghan *mujahadeen*, who were being actively supported by the CIA. Several Egyptian journals have hinted that the CIA was shielding the shaykh. Mubarak has said that he asked Washington to extradite the shaykh to Egypt before the bombing, and was refused. See "Shaykh Emerges to Deny Link to Bombing." For Egyptian coverage of extradition attempts see "Government Protests Cleric's Stay in U.S.," Paris AFP, December 2, 1992; and "U.S. Said to 'Welcome' Leader," Cairo, *Al Akhbar*, November 26, 1992.

28. See Pelletiere, *Mass Action and Islamic Fundamentalism*.

29. *Ibid*.

30. *Ibid*.

31. Prior to his assassination, Sadat was villified by important religious leaders in Egypt for precisely the sort of activity Mubarak is currently engaged in. Many Egyptians believe Sadat signed his death warrant by his response to this criticism. He arrested a respected religious leader, and later boasted that he made this individual crawl before him "like a dog." Ultimately, the religious community—or elements of it—assassinated him. See "Egyptian Cleric Has Inspired Violence," *The Washington Post*, March 6, 1993.

32. See "Egyptian leader Calls For Patience After Quake Victims Riot," *The New York Times*, October 18, 1992.

33. See "Police Detain 360 'Fundamentalists' in Cairo," Paris, AFP December 9, 1992; "President Endorses 'Terrorist' Death Sentences," Cairo, MENA, December 9, 1992.

34. See "Mosque Raid Stirs Criticism of Police," *The Washington Post*, March 12, 1993, and "19 Killed During Police Raids in Egypt," *The Washington Post*, March 11, 1993.

35. See "Mubarak Cautions Islamic Extremists," *The Washington Post*, March 5, 1993.

36. *Ibid*.

37. Along with Israel, Egypt absorbs the bulk of U.S. foreign aid. Currently the two get \$5.1 billion (Israel \$3 billion, Egypt \$2.1 billion) of the overall \$13.9 billion awarded yearly. Were Mubarak's regime to be swept away by the religious forces, the U.S. position in the Middle East would be seriously affected. See

"Israel, Egypt urged to give up some aid as a way to help Russia," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, March 31, 1993; also "Clinton Challenged on Share of U.S. Aid Going to Israel and Egypt," *The New York Times*, March 9, 1993.

38. For example, Arik Sharon, the Housing Minister.

39. Rabin recently allowed a number of previously expelled Palestinians to return to the occupied territories. However, he has refused, despite prodding by both the United States and the Palestinians, to disavow the tactic of mass deportations in the future. What is most disturbing to the Palestinians is the sheer logistics of the situation. As long as Israel keeps in-gathering Russian Jews, it has to expel more and more Palestinians. Israel and the occupied territories is a finite area; only so many human beings can live there.

40. For example, much of the violence perpetrated by Palestinians against Israelis has been visited on the police. As noted, the Israeli whose kidnapping and death touched off the deportations was a border policeman. These individuals are often Druze, that is Arabs of a particular non-Muslim sect, who are fiercely anti-Palestinian. The situation in this respect is similar to that of the Irish in New York and Chicago in the 1920s and 1930s who, as cops, policed the Italian ghettos; much of the violence of the Italian gangs originally was targeted against these Irish policeman, whom the community hated and feared. See Sam and Chuck Giancana, *Double Cross*, New York: Time Warner, 1992. See "Manhunt For Israeli Underway," *The Washington Post*, December 15, 1993, and "Israelis Say Arab Informant Killed His Shin Bet Handler," *The New York Times*, January 5, 1993. The Shin Bet are undercover police and in this instance the Arab accused of the killing was working as a police informer.

41. For criticism of Rabin see "Big stick from Rabin gets in the way of the carrot," *The Financial Times*, February 9, 1993; also "As Attacks on Israelis Mount, Leaders Debate Self-Defense," *The New York Times*, March 29, 1993; "Israeli Citizens Urged to Carry Guns," *The Washington Post*, March 15, 1993; and "Rabin seeks to revive spirit of 1948," *The Financial Times*, March 24, 1993. For criticism of Mubarak see "Egyptians See Islam Ending Corruption," *The Washington Post*, March 22, 1993, "Mosque Raid Stirs Criticism of Police," *The Washington Post*, March 12, 1993; "Rights group Criticizes Police Crackdown in Egypt," *The Washington Post*, March 21, 1993; and "Why the Fundamentalists are Winning," *The New York Times*, March 22, 1993.

42. These are the families who, for example, send their children to the American University in Cairo. In Nasser's day, the American University was shunned, because the government frowned on private schools, and especially American-run private schools. Today, it is the Egyptian universities that are scorned by the Egyptian elite.

43. See "Apprehended Palestinian Shot Dead," *The Washington Post*, March 24, 1993; also "Death Is a Two-Sided Story In the Riven West Bank," *The*

New York Times, March 21, 1993; and "Two Arabs Killed in Gaza Strip; Who Shot is Unclear," *The New York Times*, March 19, 1993.

44. See Stephen Pelletiere and Douglas Johnson II, "Oil and the New World System—CENTCOM Rethinks Its Mission," Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 1992.

45. We are not suggesting that Rabin would be replaced by Hamas. Rather, several Jewish fundamentalist groups exist which, in the author's view, are as dangerous to U.S. interests as are the Muslim extremists. A government controlled by these Jewish extremists could conceivably come to power in Israel.

46. Antipathy toward Egypt and Syria on the part of the Gulf monarchs goes back to the 1950s. At that time Arab nationalism was a powerful force in the Middle East. Led by Egypt's Nasser, the Arab nationalists sought to topple the monarchs from rule. Syria's ruling party, the Ba'th, was a part of this anti-monarchist movement. The monarchs thus would prefer to be protected instead by the United States. Israel wants to become America's base for prepositioning equipment in the area, something else the Gulf monarchs oppose.

47. The problem would appear to be that some very powerful interests in the United States have a considerable stake in the Persian Gulf, and to cut free from the area and develop domestic oil supplies—as some have suggested—would provoke a major policy fight; a prospect that no president could possibly relish.